

A Few Days on the Isle of Wight in June, 1976

By G. SUMMERS*

On 9th June, 1976 I crossed on the ferry from Southampton to Cowes on my first visit to the Isle of Wight hoping to see *cinxia* in particular (a new species for me) and also to have a look at the lepidoptera in general. I stayed at Bonchurch and upon reaching my destination took an early opportunity to explore nearby St. Boniface Down and resolved to visit the Niton Undercliff for *cinxia* next day.

It was very windy on the day of my arrival but the remainder of my five-day stay was warm and sunny, with the exception of the 12th which was dull and misty. On this day I walked from Alum Bay to Freshwater, including Tennyson Down, and the unsuitable weather, although improving later, accounts for the paucity of records from this locality.

Other areas visited were Sandown, Shanklin, Blackgang, Brading Down and a further look at St. Boniface. I confined my activities to the south of the island, visiting no woodlands, and these factors have resulted in several omissions of butterfly species which were on the wing at this time of the year. The complete list follows hereunder.

Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria* L.). Fairly common on St. Boniface Down and along the Niton Undercliff. A few at Freshwater, Bonchurch, Landslip and on Brading Down. Usually around the trees and bushes. Wall (*Lasiommata megera* L.). Singles at Sandown, Shanklin, Freshwater and Bonchurch. About six on St. Boniface Down. Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina* L.). Probably only just on the wing. Most seen on Brading Down, but fairly common on St. Boniface with a few at Freshwater, Bonchurch and along the Undercliff. Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus* L.). Very common on Brading and St. Boniface Downs. Common between Alum Bay and Freshwater, along the Undercliff and at Bonchurch. Glanville Fritillary (*Melitaea cinxia* L.). As already mentioned, this was the main quarry and was quite easily located in the well-known area of the Undercliff near Niton. About 30 individuals seen imbibing mainly at Sea Thrift and Bird's-foot Trefoil. Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta* L.). Singles between Sandown and Shanklin, at Brading and at Bonchurch. Undoubtedly this and the next two species would have been more in evidence in gardens. Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui* L.). Only one seen—on Brading Down. Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae* L.). Singles between Sandown and Shanklin, at Freshwater, two at Brading Down and a few on St. Boniface Down and at Bonchurch. Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis* D. & S.). Recorded only on St. Boniface Down in small numbers. The foodplant, Rock-rose, growing here. Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus* Rott.). Common on Brading and St. Boniface Downs, from Alum Bay to Freshwater and along the Undercliff. A few between Sandown and Shanklin and at Bonchurch.

* 23 West Close, Stafford, Staffs. ST16 3TG.

Adonis Blue (*Lysandra bellargus* Rott.). Appeared to be in similar numbers to *icarus* on St. Boniface Down. A few along the Undercliff. This and the previous species were almost exclusively found only in the areas where the larval foodplant grows in the localities mentioned. Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas* L.). Recorded on St. Boniface Down (four) and the Undercliff (two). Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi* L.). Only one seen—imbibing at Bird's-foot Trefoil along the Undercliff. Large White (*Pieris brassicae* L.). Recorded in all localities visited but in surprisingly small numbers. Some indication of increase at end of stay. Small White (*Pieris rapae* L.). Same remarks as for *brassicae*. The Green-veined White (*Pieris napi* L.) was not seen but may possibly have been overlooked although perhaps preferring different habitats from those visited. Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages* L.). Common on St. Boniface Down and recorded in smaller numbers along the Undercliff, with a few on Brading Down, at Freshwater and Bonchurch. Surprisingly the Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae* L.) was not located. Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venata* Brem. & Grey). Common on St. Boniface Down and fairly common on Brading Down. A few along the Undercliff and at Freshwater and Bonchurch. Like *tages* particularly fond of brambles.

Although mainly looking for butterflies, I recorded any moths caught or otherwise positively identified.

Brading Down produced a beautiful female Cream-spot Tiger (*Arctia villica* L.) hiding in the long grass, a nicely marked Mother Shipton (*Callistege mi* Clerck), two Cinnabars (*Tyria jacobaeae* L.) and four Burnet Companions (*Euclidia glyphica* L.), whilst St. Boniface contributed a Small Elephant Hawk (*Deilephila porcellus* L.), again in the grass, two Yellow Shells (*Camptogramma bilineata* L.), a Heart and Dart (*Agrotis exclamationis* L.), three *mi* and about ten male Fox Moths (*Macrothylacia rubi* L.) in dashing flight across the Down. The last-named were active only on the windy day previously mentioned and none were seen on the second visit to St. Boniface Down when the weather was calm and sunny.

The dull day at Freshwater added only two *bilineata* and a look at the Spur Valerian in the evening at Bonchurch revealed a few Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*).

I left the island on the morning of 14th June, crossing from Yarmouth to Lymington to spend the next nine days in the New Forest.

THE BEAUTIFUL GOTHIC (LEUCOCHLAENA ODISIS HBN.: HISPIDA GEYER) IN SUSSEX IN 1976. — I took a single example of this moth which had entered the m.v. light trap in my garden here on the 21st October. — R. R. PICKERING, 123 Manor Way, Aldwick Bay Estate, Bognor Regis, Sussex. [This seems to be the furthest east occurrence in Britain of this local Devon and Dorset speciality, and the first record of this species for Sussex. I have seen the specimen and it is in quite good condition. — J.M.C.-H.]